



Rebuild Iowa Office Coordinating Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, May 19, 2009 – 10 AM to Noon

State Department for the Blind

Assembly Room

524 4th Street

Des Moines, IA

10:00 AM Welcome and Opening Comments, Vision, Goals and Expectations

- **Lt Gen Ron Dardis, RIO Executive Director**

- Thanked everyone for their hard work as well as everyone in their organizations. General Dardis said we are all a part of the Iowa recovery team, and we all have different roles to help Iowans and communities recover from this disaster.
- The Coordinating Council was created in House File 64 to facilitate communication between RIO and other state agencies. This is a very important vehicle in the disaster recovery process. The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) and RIO exist because state government did not have the capacity to recover from the 2008 disaster. Iowa's 2008 disaster was one of the largest in U.S. history in terms of damage to public infrastructure according to FEMA Public Assistance numbers. Homeland Security had to hire over sixty people to do the work that was required by the disaster. Although this was a devastating disaster of incredible

magnitude, it is an opportunity to rebuild safer, stronger, and smarter than before.

- The RIO's Mission states: "The Rebuild Iowa Office will lead the State of Iowa's efforts to rebuild safer, stronger and smarter in the wake of the 2008 severe storms and catastrophic flooding".
- In RIO's Vision Statement, it states "A ready and responsive organization committed to rebuilding a resilient Iowa that will be safe, sustainable and economically strong for its people, reaffirming its ties to the land, rivers, environment and rich cultural history".
- It is imperative to secure resources for the disaster recovery, communicate progress of the program, and to make necessary changes in the recovery process so programs can operate efficiently and effectively. As the recovery continues, all levels need to evaluate how the process is going. The Coordinating Council will help to do that at the policy level. The Coordinating Council will provide RIO with a vehicle that will help the State reach its goals. These goals include increased communication between departments, coordination on policy regarding recovery and legislation, increased transparency, and communication on the status of assistance programs.
- Coordinating Council meetings will be held every other month opposite of the RIO's IACT meetings. The IACT meetings will be operational meetings where staff can view updates and discuss specific topics.
- The Coordinating Council will be higher level role and will be more policy focused.
- Currently, the Rebuild Iowa Office is gathering community information for commemoration events. RIO plans to staff booths at these events to help

evaluate how communities feel the recovery is going. The booths at the commemoration events will offer disaster assistance information, mental health information, and surveys similar to those at previous “Speak Up Iowa” events. It was the strength of the input of Iowans that helped shape with the RIAC’s 45- and 120-day reports, and RIO hopes to use the information gathered at these events in the future. If anyone is interested in participating, please let the RIO office know.

- The RIO’s Quarterly reports and other disaster-related information is available on the RIO’s Web site at www.rio.iowa.gov

10:10 AM Introductions of Participants

- **State Department or Organization Representative Reports:**

- Representative Pat Grassley
 - Represents Butler and Bremer counties, well over 1,800 homes and businesses impacted by the disasters. He hears things are going well. Communities that benefit from the passage of HF64 appreciated the help and the money that was there to assist them. He wants all to remember that this is a long process and it won’t be fixed with one bill. He stressed the importance of making sure to remember this is a long process. There must be a focus on the recovery effort because, although it is a year later, there is still rebuilding to do.
- Roya Stanley - Office of Energy Independence
 - Rebuilding better is not only rebuilding more efficiently, or better environmentally, but economically as well. The Office of Energy Independence is working with the Iowa Finance Authority to invest

money in these communities and their rebuilding. The Office is also provided funding for AmeriCorps for their work in these damaged communities. The Office of Energy Independence voted to invest in investigating new energy solutions and alternatives for Cedar Rapids. There will be a feasibility study to evaluate options for the downtown community. There are federal stimulus funds that will be available over the next few months focusing on energy efficiency and renewable energy. Recently, the Power Fund voted to invest in investigating alternatives in Cedar Rapids, since that community suffered very significant loss.

- Elisabeth Buck - Iowa Workforce Development
 - Iowa Workforce Development's Disaster Unemployment Assistance has provided over \$6 million worth of assistance for impacted Iowans. Approximately \$17 million dollars has been allocated for the Emergency Public Jobs (EPJ) program, which is administered by Iowa Workforce Development. As of March, 1,054 workers statewide are working on 500 worksites because of the EPJ program.
- Gary Anderson - Iowa State Association of Counties
 - The Iowa State Association of Counties plays a wide variety of roles including emergency management, public health and safety. The Iowa State Association of Counties plans to help provide guidance and recommendations for safer environments for constituents and considers itself to be on the front line of disasters.
 - Gary is also a member of the RIAC.
- Tim Hurley - Iowa League of Cities

- Mayor Hurley of Waterloo said there is a need to synchronize recovery information and communication. The backlog of normal activity has hit these disaster impacted cities. Some cities are back on their feet, yet others have much more work to do in order to rebound. Mayor Hurley hopes to get a sense of the effort still needed by these communities. Another important step in this process, that he hopes the Coordinating Council can address, is clarification of the plethora of recovery information including the beauracracy, the process and the red tape.
- Rob Berntsen - Iowa Utilities Board
 - The Iowa Utilities Board was quick to monitor and gather information as disasters occurred, such as the numerous utility outages. The Iowa Utilities board works with setting up the rate structures for those who are trying to recover their costs. There was a huge expense to get some systems back up and running. Going forward, the board can play an active role in developing policies in smart grid technology and renewable energy. The Iowa Utilities Board is making huge advances in energy and hopes to make an efficient recovery.
- Mike Tramontina - Iowa Department of Economic Development
 - The Iowa Department of Economic Development is involved financially in many ways. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds come directly to the state and are dispersed to counties, cities and other local entities. These funds have been used for the Jumpstart Small Business Assistance program. The Department is also involved in the Jumpstart Housing Assistance program. This program offers housing repair and rehabilitation, down payment assistance, or interim mortgage assistance to flood-affected homeowners. Iowa's Dept. of Economic Development also serves as

a liaison to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), mayors, local Council of Governments and Entitlement Cities. The Department is working to secure additional funding from HUD and is hoping for another six to nine-hundred million in the next allocation. Depending on the amount of funding Iowa receives, it will greatly impact how programs are funded.

- Tom Newton - Iowa Department of Public Health

- The Department of Public Health is working to ensure people have access to health services. The Department anticipated there would be a spike in substance abuse related to the disasters, so the Department increased outreach for individuals seeking substance abuse treatment. The Department is working with the federal government to secure resources for additional health service needs. The Department of Public Health is also working to educate homeowners about lead poisoning prevention. Many older homes built prior to 1960 likely contain lead paint. The Department of Public Health is working to ensure children and adults know the risks associated with lead paint exposure. The Department's goal in the Coordinating Council is to be a resource to the Council, provide services, and making sure all involved are actively communicating.

- Senator Rob Hogg - Cedar Rapids

- Senator Hogg said he really appreciates how much the State has tended to Cedar Rapids and the area's needs. He said the recovery can't be fast enough with approximately 5,000 residential and 1,000 commercial properties impacted. It's very challenging for people in his area and continues to be that way. His goals include getting people back in their homes and getting businesses back open again.

He said his own personal experience shows there is a tendency to forget and stressed another disaster is going to happen again, only it may be another community the next time. He said we have to do everything possible to stop it from happening again.

- Bret Mills - Iowa Finance Authority
 - The Iowa Finance Authority has worked directly with securing funding for disaster-impacted Iowans. On the state side, the Authority worked with State Jumpstart Housing for down payment, interim mortgage, and housing repair and rehabilitation assistance. On the federal side, the Authority has worked on securing low-income housing tax credits. Another valuable resource to the recovery is the I-JOBS Program. Although it was created as an infrastructure investment initiative to create jobs, strengthen the state's economy, and rebuild several critical areas of the state's infrastructure, it is important to use these funds in a way that can help those who were impacted by the floods and tornadoes.
- Bill Northey – Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
 - Agriculture was hit hard by the disaster. Land, crops, and conservation practices were all affected. The Legislature passed some assistance dollars for addressing damage to conservation practices. An estimated \$40 million dollars worth of damage affected existing conservation practices. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is looking at watershed management in an effort to evaluate whether Iowa can do a better job. This recovery effort is a chance to address current problems and provide an opportunity to learn and model for future disasters.

- Karen Misjak - Iowa College Student Aid Commission
 - The Iowa College Student Aid Commission was able to identify \$500,000 worth of aid for families affected by the flood. The Iowa College Student Aid Commission is currently working to get additional aid to those families affected by last year's disasters. They are working to identify unmet needs in order to provide additional grants to students in need.
- Doug Elliott – East Central Iowa Council of Governments
 - Council of Governments (COGs) work to deliver Jumpstart Housing and CDBG funds to the local level. Six of the 11 COGS affected also work to administer the Jumpstart Small Business Assistance program. In addition to working with the Iowa Dept. of Economic Development and Iowa Workforce Development, COGs are working with local governments and FEMA in the buyout process. The COGs want to ensure the state's regional planning agencies are available to assist in the long-term recovery strategy.
- Ljerka Vasiljevic - Department of Public Safety - Fire Marshal's Office
 - The State Fire Marshal's Office building code is a mandatory minimum. Many agencies have rules where the building has rules and different codes for different structures in these assistance programs.
- Representative Tom Schueller
 - Representative Schueller believes he brings a different perspective than his colleagues to the Coordinating Council. His area suffered more damage in the area of agriculture, than residential and

businesses. Few towns in his area suffered significant flood damage. The perspective he plans to bring to the Coordinating Council is a focus on educating individuals on disasters and empowering them to be more proactive. There are many things that we can do to prevent the magnitude of the disaster that occurred in Cedar Rapids. There is also a need to change the mind set of Iowans.

- Stuart Anderson - Iowa Department of Transportation

- The Iowa Department of Transportation played a key role in the communication of road closures during and after the disaster. Immediately after the disaster, the Iowa Department of Transportation assisted local communities in removing debris and rebuilding roadways. From a long-term perspective, the Department is working to secure federal funding assistance for infrastructure.

- Pat Boddy – Iowa Department of Natural Resources

- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is working on the flood plain management process. This process will include mapping and will require FEMA to approve and certify the maps. The Department is providing local program oversight in the mapping process. The Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources has also been allocated more than \$13 million from the I-JOBS program for prevention and recovery work and is coordinating its recovery efforts with Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. They are working to leverage the Iowa Wetlands Project and are working on state park recovery efforts. They hope to achieve a rapid and thoughtful recovery that includes mitigation and disaster preparedness.

- Sally Titus – Iowa Department of Human Services

- The Iowa Department of Human Services played an important role immediately after the disaster by providing mental health counseling to those who were impacted, along with publicizing the food stamp program. The Department coordinated with the Rebuild Iowa Office and Long-Term Recovery Committees for the Iowa Unmet Needs Disaster Grant program. DHS also secured federal funding for mental health counseling for those with emotion needs that are still in need.
- John McCalley - Iowa Department on Aging
 - The Iowa Department on Aging is working with the Iowa Department of Public Health and Department of Human Services to meet the unmet needs of Iowa's flood-affected elderly population. The Department is working with local Area Agencies on Aging in order to update their disaster plans for serving the elderly across the state. As the recovery and rebuilding process moves forward, they strive to connect with other agencies that wish to implement programs for the elderly.
- Judy Jeffrey – Iowa Department of Education
 - Many school districts suffered a complete loss of their transportation fleet. The Iowa Department of Education served as a conduit of information for school districts, administrators, parents, and students during the disasters. Districts are locally controlled and their funding streams are highly regulated. The Iowa Department of Education did not have the flexibility it needed to be able to clean up, go through demolition, and begin rebuilding assistance.

- Cyndi Pederson - Department of Cultural Affairs
 - As the State rebuilds, the Dept. of Cultural Affairs want us to rebuild with “quality of life” in mind. Some of the ways the Legislature did this was through HF114 and SF481, which relate to historic preservation and tax credits. Federally, the Department secured money for the arts.
- **Lt Gen Dardis**
 - It is important to know the role each department plays in the recovery. Another major player in the recovery process is the FEMA National Exercise Division. Their goal is to redesign or improve the disaster recovery process and hope to make changes on how Iowa’s disaster recovery works. This week, FEMA participated in the Iowa Recovery Analysis Workshop with participants from local, state and federal government. The Recovery Analysis Workshop served as a mid-course analysis. It analyzed best practices used in this disaster and addressed what practices can be improved. It also served as an opportunity to analyze recovery effort for areas of improvements such as hidden flexibility of federal dollars, the duplication of benefits process and SBA flexibility.

11:10 AM FEMA’s Iowa Recovery Analysis Workshop and Surveys

- **Steve Saunders, Director of FEMA Preparedness Directorate National Exercise Division**
 - Steve is a native Iowan. He lived in Sioux City 35 + years and worked with emergency management programs.

- Steve said he was in Iowa to work on a process to fix what is going to happen in the future and share it with federal partners. He said initial data collection was half-way done in the Iowa Recovery Analysis for the 2008 disasters. Individual interviews would also be taking place at the Joint Field Office about how things went with this disaster recovery. Steve said we need the input back from Iowa and Iowans to make changes at the federal level.
- Steve said Craig Fugate is the new FEMA Administrator. He said Iowa's job is to build relationships and make things better, so when the next disaster occurs the state and nation are more prepared to handle it.

11:30 AM Review of Point of Contact and Inter-Agency Coordination Team Meetings

- **Susan Dixon, Community and Regional Recovery Planning Director**

- The Inter-Agency Coordination Team (IACT) met for the first time June 27, 2008. The Inter-Agency Coordination Team was organized and lead by RIO to facilitate information sharing and agency updates, coordinate and collaborate disaster response activities, and to review and discuss specific recovery projects. Issues discussed include landfills and debris removal, salvage and preservation of quality building materials, lead-based paint abatement and training, farm recovery assistance, and replacement housing and new construction. Projects presented and discussed include the Waverly Inflatable Dam, Parkersburg Emergency Services Building, Parkersburg Plaza, Coralville Transit Project, Iowa City Wastewater Treatment Relocation, Cedar Rapids Co-Generation Feasibility Study, Cedar Rapids Human Service Campus and the New Hartford Drainage District.

11:40 AM Discussion and closing remarks

- How do we improve coordinating disaster recovery progress and coordination?
 - Mayor Tim Hurley has a document from League's SF457 over expended budgets. This is also available online. A handout was passed around.
 - Senator Hogg stated he did not have a chance to read the RIO's April Quarterly Report. Senator Hogg would like the Coordinating Council to have some sort of focus on results for people and communities involved with recovery. The purpose of House File 64 was to get lowans back in permanent housing in 2009. Senator Hogg questioned if the State is meeting its targets. Because of these questions, Senator Hogg would like to see the Council have some measurement to be able to gauge the recovery progress.

12:00 PM Adjourn – Next meeting in July, date and time TBA